

BEFORE THE  
POSTAL REGULATORY COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20268-0001

*In the Matter of:*  
Imperial Post Office  
Imperial, Texas 79743

Docket No. A2012-116

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE  
COMMENTS REGARDING APPEAL  
(March 6, 2012)

On January 11, 2012, the Postal Regulatory Commission (Commission) received four appeals, from Maxie King, Wanda Lewis, Nellie McDowell, and the Imperial, Texas Public Library (collectively referred to as Petitioners) objecting to the discontinuance of the Post Office at Imperial, Texas<sup>1</sup>. The Commission issued Order No. 1175, its Notice and Order Accepting Appeal and Establishing Procedural Schedule under 39 U.S.C. §404(d), on January 26, 2012. In accordance with Order No. 1175, the administrative record was filed with the Commission on January 26, 2012. On January 13, 2012, Petitioners Lewis and McDowell each filed a Participant Statement, and on January 14, 2012 Petitioner King filed a Participant Statement.

Petitioners raise two principal issues concerning the discontinuance: (1) the impact on the provision of postal services and (2) the impact upon the Imperial community. As reflected in the administrative record of this proceeding, the Postal Service gave these issues serious consideration. Consistent with the

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<sup>1</sup> This discontinuance was conducted pursuant to handbook PO-101, dated August 2004, and updated with Postal Bulletin revisions through August 2, 2007..

Postal Service's statutory obligations and Commission precedent,<sup>2</sup> the Postal Service considered a number of other issues, including the economic savings expected to result from discontinuing the Imperial Post Office and the impact upon postal employees. Accordingly, the Final Determination to discontinue the Imperial Post Office should be affirmed.

### **Background**

The Final Determination To Close the Imperial, TX Post Office and Establish Service by Highway Contract Route Service ("Final Determination" or "FD"),<sup>3</sup> as well as the administrative record, indicate that the Imperial Post Office provides EAS-11 level service to 152 P.O. Box customers and to retail and walk-in customers from 8:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, and from 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on Saturday.<sup>4</sup> Retail services include the sale of stamps, money orders, special services such as Registered Mail, Certified Mail, Insured Mail, COD Mail, and Express Mail services, and the acceptance and dispatch of mail. The Postmaster position became vacant on August 1, 2009 when the Postmaster was appointed Postmaster at the Ft. Stockton Post Office.<sup>5</sup> Since the Postmaster vacancy, a

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<sup>2</sup> See 39 U.S.C. §404(d) (2)(A).

<sup>3</sup> The Final Determination can be found at Item 47 in the Administrative Record. All citations to the Final Determination will be to "FD at \_\_\_\_," rather than to the item number. The FD page number refers to the pages as marked on the upper left of the FD. Other items in the administrative record are referred to as "Item No. \_\_\_\_."

<sup>4</sup> FD at 2, Item No. 15, Post Office Survey Sheet; Item No. 33, Proposal, at 2.

<sup>5</sup> The administrative record incorrectly states that the Imperial Postmaster retired on August 1, 2009. Upon further research, it was determined that the Imperial Postmaster position became vacant when the Postmaster applied for, and was awarded, the Postmaster position at Ft. Stockton. Regardless, the administrative record continues to reflect that the Imperial Postmaster position is currently vacant, which is an appropriate basis for commencing a discontinuance study

noncareer postmaster relief (“PMR”) was installed as officer-in-charge (“OIC”) of the office.<sup>6</sup> When the discontinuance study was conducted, the noncareer PMR was still serving as the OIC. If the Final Determination to discontinue the Imperial Post Office is affirmed, the non-career PMR may be separated from the Postal Service; no other Postal Service employee will be adversely affected.<sup>7</sup>

The average number of daily retail window transactions at the Imperial Post Office is fourteen, accounting for thirteen minutes of retail work daily.<sup>8</sup> Revenue at the Imperial Post Office is low, although it has fluctuated: it rose from \$17,006 in FY 2008 to \$24,273 in FY 2009, and decreased to \$14,925 in FY 2010.<sup>9</sup> There are no permit mailers or postage meter customers.

Upon implementation of the Final Determination, retail and delivery service will be provided by highway contract route (HCR) carrier under the administrative responsibility of the Monahans Post Office, which will also offer retail services. Service will be provided to cluster box units (CBUs). The Monahans Post Office,<sup>10</sup> an EAS-18 level office located 29 miles away<sup>11</sup> offers window service

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under Handbook PO-101.

<sup>6</sup> Petitioner King questions whether a hiring freeze prevented appointment of a new Postmaster at the Imperial Post Office. Over the course of the past few years, the Postal Service has experienced several hiring freezes. Whenever there is a vacancy in a small office, it is customary to conduct a study of the business activity and investigate the feasibility of providing service by alternative means, which was the case here. This is consistent with Handbook PO-101, which provides that a Postmaster vacancy is a suitable justification for commencing a discontinuance study. Of course, the vacancy is not the sole factor motivating this discontinuance action; rather, the totality of circumstances supports the administrative decision at issue here.

<sup>7</sup> FD at 6; Item No. 33, Proposal, at 8.

<sup>8</sup> FD at 2; Item No. 10, Window Transaction Survey; Item No. 33, Proposal, at 2.

<sup>9</sup> FD at 2; Item No. 18, Postal Service Form 4920; Item No. 33, Proposal, at 2.

<sup>10</sup> The Monahans Post Office is not listed as a candidate for discontinuance as part of the Retail Access Optimization Initiative (PRC Docket No. N2011-1).

<sup>11</sup> FD at 2; Item No. 18, Postal Service Form 4920; Item No. 33, Proposal, at 2.

hours from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday and between 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. on Saturday. There are 975 P.O. Boxes available at Monahans.<sup>12</sup> Retail service is also available at the Grandfalls Post Office located 11 miles away, offering window service between 7:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. on Saturday.<sup>13</sup>

The Postal Service followed proper procedures that led to the posting of the Final Determination. Issues raised by the customers of the Imperial Post Office were considered and properly addressed by the Postal Service. The Postal Service complied with all notice requirements.<sup>14</sup> In addition to the posting of the Proposal and Final Determination at the Imperial, Monahans and Grandfalls Post Offices, customers received notice through other means. Questionnaires were distributed to all P.O. Box customers of the Imperial Post Office. Questionnaires were also available to retail and walk-in customers over the counter at the Imperial Post Office.<sup>15</sup> Questionnaires were accompanied by a letter from Allen Brock, Manager, Post Office Operations, which advised customers that the Postal Service was studying the possible closing or consolidation of the Imperial Post Office due to decreasing workload and

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<sup>12</sup> FD at 2; Item No. 18, Postal Service Form 4920; Item No. 33, Proposal, at 2.

<sup>13</sup> The Grandfalls Post Office is listed as a candidate for discontinuance as part of the Retail Access Optimization Initiative (PRC Docket No. N2011-1). See discussion *infra*.

<sup>14</sup> The Proposal and Invitation for Comments on the Proposal to Close the Imperial, TX Post Office and Establish Service by Highway Contract Route Service were posted at the Imperial Post Office, the Monahans Post Office and the Grandfalls Post Office between June 23, 2011 and August 24, 2011 (FD at 2; Item No. 36, Round Date Stamped Proposals and Invitations for Comments from Affected Offices). The Final Determination was posted at all three Post Offices on December 9, 2011 (Item No. 49, Round Date Stamped Final Determination, at 1-3).

<sup>15</sup> FD at 2; Item No. 20, Questionnaire Instruction Letter to OIC/Postmaster; Item No. 33, Proposal, at 2. Notice by these methods complies with all regulations in 39 C.F.R.241.3 and procedures specified in Handbook PO-101.

decreasing revenue over the last three years. The Postal Service advised that it was studying whether to provide pickup and delivery of mail, as well as the sale of stamps and other customary postal services, by highway contract route service under the administrative responsibility of the Monahans Post Office. If the change to HCR service was implemented, customers would continue to use the Imperial, TX name as the city name in the last line of addresses.<sup>16</sup> The letter invited customers to complete and return a customer questionnaire.<sup>17</sup> The Postal Service distributed questionnaires to 152 customers. Forty-seven customers returned completed questionnaires; none were favorable, 14 were unfavorable, and 33 expressed no opinion.<sup>18</sup> The Postal Service considered and addressed their concerns in written response letters, in the Proposal, and in the Final Determination.<sup>19</sup>

Representatives from the Postal Service were available during a community meeting on June 7, 2011 to answer questions and provide information to customers; 80 customers attended.<sup>20</sup> The Postal Service representatives responded to customer questions and concerns.<sup>21</sup> Customers received formal notice of the Proposal, which was posted with an invitation for public comment at

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<sup>16</sup> FD at 2 and 6; Item No. 21, Cover Letter, Questionnaire and Enclosures.

<sup>17</sup> Item No. 21, Cover Letter, Questionnaire and Enclosures.

<sup>18</sup> FD at 2; Item No. 22, Returned Customer Questionnaires and Postal Service Response Letters; Item No. 33, Proposal, at 2.

<sup>19</sup> FD at 2-4; Item No. 22, Returned Customer Questionnaires and Postal Service Response Letters; Item No. 23, Postal Service Customer Questionnaire Analysis, at 1-2; Item No. 33, Proposal, at 2-6.

<sup>20</sup> FD at 2; Item No. 24 Community Meeting Roster, at 1-6.

<sup>21</sup> FD at 2-6; Item No. 25, Community Meeting Analysis; Item No. 33, at 1-3; Item No. 33, Proposal, at 2-6.

the Imperial, Monahans and Grandfalls Post Offices for 60 days from June 23, 2011 to August 24, 2011.<sup>22</sup> The Postal Service received no comments during the posting period.<sup>23</sup>

On December 9, 2011, the Postal Service issued its Final Determination. The Final Determination was posted at the Imperial Post Office, the Monahans Post Office, and the Grandfalls Post Office on December 9, 2011, as confirmed by the round date stamped Final Determination.<sup>24</sup>

In light of the Postmaster vacancy, declining workload, low revenue, the variety of delivery and retail options (including the convenience of rural route delivery, the expected financial savings, and limited effect on Postal Service employees, the Postal Service issued its Final Determination. Regular and effective postal services will continue to be provided to the Imperial community in

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<sup>22</sup> FD at 2; Item No. 36, Round Date Stamped Proposals and Invitations for Comments from Affected Offices.

<sup>23</sup> Item No. 38, Memo to Record. Petitioners assert that the Postal Service conducted the discontinuance study during early summer when many residents were on vacation and could not participate. The Postal Service provided customers with several opportunities to submit comments and express their views. On May 19, 2011, the Postal Service letter advised customers of the discontinuance study and invited customers to use the questionnaires to provide comments. Item No. 21, Cover Letter, Questionnaire and Enclosures. Indeed, the Postal service received 47 responses. The same letter also advised customers of a community meeting scheduled for June 7, 2011. Eighty customers attended. FD at 2; Item No. 24, Postal Service Customer Community Meeting Roster. If the date of the community meeting is inconvenient, Postal Service internal regulations give local discontinuance coordinators flexibility in determining meeting times that encourage customer participation. See Handbook PO-101. Between June 23, 2011 and August 24, 2011, the Proposal and Invitation for Comments were posted for 60 days in the three affected Post Offices. The Invitation for Comments asked customers to provide written comments, noting that comments would be most helpful if they offer specific opinions and information favorable or unfavorable regarding the potential effect of the proposed change on postal services and on the community. No comments were received. Thus, the discontinuance study was not limited to the early summer and provided customers with several opportunities to participate and provide their input.

<sup>24</sup> Item No. 49, Round Date Stamped Final Determination, at 1-3.

a cost-effective manner upon implementation of the Final Determination.<sup>25</sup>

The issues raised by the Petitioners are addressed below.

### **Effect on Postal Services**

Consistent with the mandate in 39 U.S.C. §404(d)(2)(A)(iii) and as addressed throughout the administrative record, the Postal Service considered the effect of closing the Imperial Post Office on postal services provided to Imperial customers. The closing is premised upon providing regular and effective postal services to Imperial customers. The Postal Service has considered the impact of closing the Imperial Post Office upon the provision of postal services to Imperial customers.<sup>26</sup>

Upon implementation of the Final Determination, delivery and retail services will be provided by highway contract route service under the administrative responsibility of the Monahans Post Office to cluster box units (CBUs). CBUs are secure, free-standing units of individually locked mail compartments that are provided, installed and maintained by the Postal Service at no cost to customers, and with keys provided to customers by the Postal Service. A significant benefit of CBUs is the security that they provide against mail theft and mailbox vandalism. Additionally, parcel lockers may be installed alongside CBUs, thereby allowing customers to receive packages that do not require a signature in the same secure environment.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> FD at 2-8.

<sup>26</sup> FD at 2-8.

<sup>27</sup> FD at 2; Item No. 33, Proposal, at 2.

In addition to highway contract route service, customers may also access postal services at the Monahans Post Office, located 29 miles away, or the Grandfalls Post Office, located 11 miles away. The Monahans Post Office offers window service hours from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, and between 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. on Saturday.<sup>28</sup> Retail service will also be available at the Grandfalls Post Office, located 11 miles away. Window hours at the Grandfalls Post Office are from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, and from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. on Saturday. Customers can also visit any other Post Office proximate to their employment or other activities to complete postal transactions.

Petitioners express concern about of the effect on postal services of the Imperial Post Office closing, noting the convenience of the Imperial Post Office and requesting its retention. They contend that service through the Monahans Post Office will not provide a maximum degree of effective postal services for several reasons: (1) customers should not have to travel to Monahans, thereby consuming time and money on gas to access services; (2) Grandfalls Post Office appears on the candidate list in the Retail Access Optimization Initiative; (3) the Postal Service targeted the Imperial Post Office for discontinuance because of the Postmaster vacancy; and (4) senior citizens will be adversely affected.

Petitioners, as well as some customer questionnaire responses, are concerned about travel to the Monahans Post Office and whether the HCR

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<sup>28</sup> FD at 2; Item No. 18, Postal Form 4920; Item No. 33, Proposal, at 2.



carrier can provide the same services as the Imperial Post Office. Customers, however, will not be required to travel to another Post Office to receive or obtain delivery and most retail services. Many of these services will be provided by the HCR carrier to CBUs located close to customers' residences. In hardship cases, delivery can be made to the home of the customer. Changes in the type of delivery are considered where service by existing methods would pose an extreme physical hardship or an individual customer. Such requests can be submitted in writing to the Monahans Postmaster. Customers that received P.O. Box service at Imperial can choose to continue P.O. Box service at the Monahans Post Office or the Grandfalls Post Office, if they prefer.

Retail services provided at the Post Office are also available from the HCR carrier<sup>29</sup> The HCR carrier can perform many functions when the carrier delivers the mail, thereby avoiding the need for customers to travel to a Post Office for most transactions. Customers can also request special services, such as Certified, registered, or Express Mail, Delivery Confirmation, Signature Confirmation, and COD from the carrier.<sup>30</sup> The Postal Service offers various convenient options that can save customers a trip to the Post Office or having to interact directly with a carrier. In fact, most transactions do not require the customer to meet the HCR carrier at the CBU, thereby alleviating the need to travel to the Post Office for most retail services. Stamps by Mail and Money

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<sup>29</sup> FD at 3; Item No.22, Postal Service Response Letters, at 23, 27, 33, 34, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 60, 61; Item No. 33, Proposal, at 3. There are 975 P.O. Boxes available at the Monahans Post Office and 157 at the Grandfalls Post Office (Item No. 18, Postal Form 4920).

<sup>30</sup> FD at 3; Item No. 33, Proposal, at 33.

Order Application forms are available for customer convenience, and stamps are also available at many stores and gas stations, online at usps.com, or by calling 1-800-STAMPS-24.<sup>31</sup>

Petitioners express concern regarding the status of the Grandfalls Post Office and assert that it could close in the future.<sup>32</sup> The Grandfalls Post Office appears on the candidate list in the Retail Access Optimization (“RAO”) Initiative (PRC Docket N2011-1), but the RAO has no impact on this appeal proceeding because (1) the statute governing this appeal proceeding, 39 U.S.C. § 404(d), limits the Commission’s review to facts contained in the administrative record, which does not include any facts regarding the RAO Initiative, and (2) there has been no change in operations at the Grandfalls Office. The impact of potential discontinuance of the Grandfalls Post Office on postal services offered to Imperial residents would, of course, be considered should the feasibility study of the Grandfalls Office advance to the proposal stage.<sup>33</sup>

The record related to the RAO Initiative falls outside of the administrative record and cannot be considered by the Commission in this appeal proceeding. Section 404(d) limits the Commission’s review of the closing or consolidation of a Post Office to the administrative record. The presence of the Grandfalls Post Office on a list of candidates for discontinuance study was not a factor at the time the Postal Service made the decision to discontinue the Imperial Post Office.

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<sup>31</sup> *Id.*

<sup>32</sup> Delivery of mail by HCR carrier to the CBUs will be administered by the Monahans Post Office. FD at 2. The Grandfalls Post Office would only provide retail services.

<sup>33</sup> If the Imperial Post Office is closed, delivery and retail services by highway contract route service will be provided under the administration of the Monahans Post Office.

Accordingly, consideration of this fact now is not germane to review of whether the Postal Service's decision in this case was (a) arbitrary, capricious, an abuse of discretion, or otherwise not in accordance with the law; (b) without observance of procedure required by law; or (c) unsupported by substantial evidence on the record. 39 U.S.C. § 404(d).

In any event, the identification of the Grandfalls Post Office in PRC Docket No. N2011-1 has no impact upon the facts underlying the instant appeal. The fact of identification has no impact on access to retail service for customers of the Imperial Post Office. Initiation of a feasibility study for the Grandfalls Post Office does not indicate that a full discontinuance study will be conducted, or any change in customer retail options will ensue. As such, current facts are too tenuous to warrant consideration of this issue as a factor in the discontinuance of the Imperial Post Office.

All kinds of future change may be germane to a future study, but they do not change studies conducted in the past. The Postal Service is nowhere near a stage where future decisions can be evaluated, let alone decided. In fact, any decision regarding the possible discontinuance of the Grandfalls Post Office and its potential effect on customers of that office is not ripe for consideration. While the recent discontinuance of a nearby Post Office may be germane in later discontinuance studies, the converse is not.

Petitioners question why a decision was made to study the Imperial Post

Office on grounds of the Postmaster vacancy.<sup>34</sup> Under regulations in Handbook PO-101, it was common to initiate a study when the Postmaster position became vacant. See Handbook PO-101 § 213. The Postal Service further notes that changes made to Handbook PO-101 effective July 14, 2011, promote consistency of decision-making by allowing for the identification of candidate facilities for study based on factors such as workload, customer demand, and availability of alternatives. In this case, the discontinuance study was undertaken for a variety of reasons, including the Postmaster vacancy

Petitioners raise a concern about the effect of closing the Imperial Post Office on senior citizens, persons with disabilities, and low income customers. The Postal Service explained that highway contract route service is especially beneficial to many senior citizens and those who face special challenges. The HCR carrier can provide delivery and retail services via cluster box units. Most transactions do not even require meeting the carrier at the CBU. Customers do not have to make a special trip to the post office for service. On request, special provisions are made for hardship cases or special customer needs.<sup>35</sup>

Thus, the Postal Service properly concluded that Imperial customers will continue to receive regular and effective service by highway contract route service under the administrative responsibility of the Monahans Post Office.

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<sup>34</sup> The discontinuance study was initiated because the Postmaster position was vacant and was earning less than 2.00 hours daily, thus performing below standards to operate as an independent Post Office. FD at 2.

<sup>35</sup> FD at 5; Item No. 22, Returned Customer Questionnaires and Postal Service Response Letters, at 55, 56, 59; Item No. 25, Community Meeting Analysis, at 2; Item No. 33, Proposal, at 5.

### **Effect upon the Imperial Community**

The Postal Service is obligated to consider the effect of its decision to close the Imperial Post Office upon the Imperial community. 39 U.S.C. § 404(d)(2)(A)(i). While the primary purpose of the Postal Service is to provide postal services, the statute recognizes the substantial role in community affairs often played by local Post Offices, and requires consideration of that role whenever the Postal Service proposes to close or consolidate a Post Office.

Imperial is an unincorporated rural community located in Pecos County. The community is administered politically by Pecos County. Police protection services are provided by the Pecos County Sheriff's Department. The Imperial Volunteer Fire Department provides fire protection services. Schools are administered by the Buena Vista Independent School District. The community is comprised of self-employed farmers, retirees, those employed in local businesses and those who commute to nearby towns.<sup>36</sup> While there are several businesses and organizations, the questionnaires returned by Imperial customers indicate that, in general, the residents travel elsewhere for most other supplies and services.<sup>37</sup> Those businesses, moreover, were provided the same opportunities as other customers to make their views known during the discontinuance study if they chose to do so.

Communities generally require regular and effective postal services and these will continue to be provided to the Imperial community. Highway contract

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<sup>36</sup> FD at 6; Item No. 16, Community Survey Sheet; Item No. 33, Proposal, at 6.

<sup>37</sup> FD at 6; Item No. 33, Proposal, at 6.

route delivery to CBUs under the administrative responsibility of the Monahans Post Office is expected to be able to handle mail delivery to Imperial customers. In addition, the Postal Service has concluded that other nonpostal services provided by the Imperial Post Office will be available at the Monahans and Grandfalls Post Offices. Government forms sometimes provided by the Post Office will also be available at the Monahans and Grandfalls Post Office or by contacting local government agencies.<sup>38</sup>

Moreover, as explained during the discontinuance study, a community's identity derives from the interest and vitality of its residents and their use of its name. Customers raised concerns about having to make an address change on their bank checks and stationery. Customers can continue to use the Imperial community name, although the ZIP Code will have to change<sup>39</sup>

Petitioners and some customers asked why the Imperial Post office was being discontinued while others were retained. They note that larger Post Offices are losing more money than the Imperial Post Office. The administrative record explains, however, that Post Offices are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. When there is a vacancy in a small office, it is customary to conduct a study of the business activity and investigate the feasibility of providing service by alternative means. In this case, it was determined that the Postal Service could continue to provide a maximum degree of effective and regular postal services to

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<sup>38</sup> FD at 6; Item No. 33, Proposal, at 6.

<sup>39</sup> FD at 2; Item No. 22 Postal Service Response Letters, at 18; Item No. 33, Proposal, at 2.

the Imperial community while realizing an estimated cost savings of \$47,048 annually after discontinuation of the Imperial Post Office.<sup>40</sup>

Some customers expressed concern about the effect on local businesses of closing the Imperial Post Office, believing that the loss of the Post Office would have a detrimental effect on the Imperial business community. There is no indication that the Imperial business community will be adversely affected. Businesses generally require regular and effective postal services and these will continue to be provided to the Imperial business community. The questionnaires returned by Imperial postal customers indicate that, in general, Imperial residents will travel elsewhere for other supplies and services, but will continue to use local businesses if the Imperial Post Office is discontinued.<sup>41</sup>

Petitioners assert that discontinuance of the Imperial Post Office will deprive the community without a place to meet. Many customer questionnaires cited the potential loss of a central location to post notices. Residents may continue to meet informally, socialize, and share information at the other businesses, churches and residences in the community-at-large, particularly at the Imperial Public Library.<sup>42</sup> In addition, if delivery service is provided to centralized delivery units such as CBUs, that structure may provide a gathering place.

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<sup>40</sup> FD at 6; Item No. 33, Proposal, at 6.

<sup>41</sup> FD at 5; Item No. 22, Completed Customer Questionnaires and Postal Service Response Letters; Item No.25, Postal Service Customer Community Meeting Analysis; at 2; Item No. 33, Proposal, at 6.

<sup>42</sup> FD at 6-7; Item No. 22, Completed Customer Questionnaires and Postal Service Response Letters, at 10, 40, 46, 61; Item No. 25, Postal Service Customer Community Meeting Analysis, at 3; Item No. 33, Proposal, at 6-7.

In sum, the Postal Service has met its burden, as set forth in 39 U.S.C. § 404(d)(2)(A)(i), by considering the effect of closing the Imperial Post Office on the community and businesses served by the Imperial Post Office.

### **Economic Savings**

Postal officials also properly considered the economic savings that would result from the proposed closing, as required by 39 U.S.C. § 404(d)(2)(A)(iv). The estimated annual savings associated with discontinuing the Imperial Post Office are \$47,048.<sup>43</sup> Economic factors are one of several factors that the Postal Service considered, and economic savings have been calculated as required for discontinuance studies, which is noted throughout the administrative record and consistent with the mandate in 39 U.S.C. § 404(d)(2)(A)(iv).

Thus, replacement service by highway contract route service to CBUs would lead to significant savings. The Postal Service estimates are supported by record evidence and are in accordance with applicable statutory obligations. The Postal Service, therefore, has considered the economic savings to the Postal Service resulting from such a closing, consistent with its statutory obligations and Commission precedent. See 39 U.S.C. § 404(d)(2)(A)(iv).

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<sup>43</sup> The Postal Service also calculated that there will be a one-time expense of \$7,370 for the movement of the facility. FD at 7. When this is factored into the economic analysis, the result is a savings of \$39,678.



## **Effect on Employees**

As documented in the record, the impact on postal employees is minimal. The Postmaster position became vacant on August 1, 2009 when the former Postmaster was appointed Postmaster at the Ft. Stockton Post Office. A PMR was installed as the temporary officer-in-charge (OIC). The noncareer PMR may be separated from employment. The record shows that no other employee would be adversely affected by this closing.<sup>44</sup> Therefore, in making its determination, the Postal Service considered the effect of closing on employees at the Imperial Post Office, consistent with its statutory obligations. See 39 U.S.C. § 404(d)(2)(A)(ii).

## **Conclusion**

As reflected throughout the administrative record, the Postal Service has followed proper procedures and carefully considered the effect of closing the Imperial Post Office on the provision of postal services to the Imperial community, the impact on the community and local businesses, the economic savings that would result from the proposed closing, the effect on postal employees, and other factors, consistent with the mandate of 39 U.S.C. § 404(d)(2)(A).

After taking all factors into consideration, the Postal Service determined that the advantages of discontinuance outweigh the disadvantages. In addition, the Postal Service concluded that after the discontinuance, the Postal Service will continue to provide effective and regular service to Imperial customers. The

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<sup>44</sup> FD at 6-7; Item No. 33, Proposal, at 7.

Postal Service respectfully submits that this conclusion is consistent with, and supported by, the administrative record and is in accord with the policies stated in 39 U.S.C. § 404(d)(2)(A). The Postal Service's decision to close the Imperial Post Office should, accordingly, be affirmed.

The Postal Service respectfully requests that the determination to close the Imperial Post Office be affirmed.

Respectfully submitted,

**UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE**

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March 6, 2012